

Visiting Scholar Dr. Claudia Callil

Dr. Claudia Callil is a professor at the Federal University of Mato Grosso, Midwest of Brazil. Her research is focused on the distribution and functional roles of freshwater invertebrates in the Pantanal basin of southern Brazil, the world's largest freshwater wetland. She works on the ecology of the wetland to understand what controls the distribution and abundance of freshwater mussels and other aquatic invertebrates. Over the last 20 years she has focused on improving the science and conservation of this wetland and of mussels throughout South America. She is the author or coauthor of 30 peer-reviewed scientific articles on the ecology of the Pantanal and its macro-fauna, including a comprehensive review of the status and distribution of freshwater mussels throughout all hydrographic regions of South America, which was published in the journal *Hydrobiologia* in 2013.

Since July 2013, Dr. Callil has been serving as a visiting scholar in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, studying mussel propagation and culture techniques and field monitoring approaches with staff at the Freshwater Mussel Conservation Center. Dr. Callil is collaborating with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Dr. Jess Jones, who is stationed in the Department, to develop mussel restoration strategies that can be utilized in the United States, Brazil, and other parts of the world.

In April 2014, Dr. Callil visited the Service's Virginia Field Office in Gloucester to present "Freshwater Mussels and Biodiversity of the Pantanal" to the staff. It was an opportunity for her to share her work and to learn about the Service's mission and approaches to conservation, including how the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program restores natural resources such as rivers and mussel populations, and how the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program is restoring wetland hydrology at the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.



Claudia conducting field work in Brazil's Pantanal wetland.



Claudia and her students sampling mussels in the Cuiaba River basin of Brazil.